

THE
SIEGE OF BERWICK,
A TRAGEDY,

BY MR. JERNINGHAM:

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre - Royal, Covent - Garden.

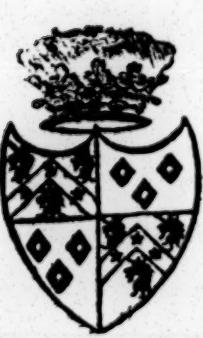


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T Q

M R S . P O P E .

M A D A M ,

THIS Tragedy is so much indebted to You, that it naturally shelters itself under Your name, even when it is presented to the Reader.—Accustomed as the Public is to your superior talents, the judges of acting felt themselves impressed upon this occasion with a display of new and unacquainted excellencies.

A 2 While

DEDICATION.

While I am paying this just homage to you, I beg to express my sense of obligation to the Gentlemen who performed in this Play.

I am,

With the Sentiments of the

highest Esteem,

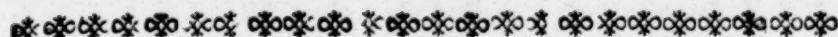
Your obedient humble Servant,

EDWARD JERNINGHAM;

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

IN the Reign of EDWARD the Third, Sir Alexander Seaton refused to surrender the town of BERWICK, even at the Peril of losing his two Sons; who being taken prisoners in a sally, were threatened with immediate death, unless the town was delivered up.

See Abercromby's Martial Atchievements, vol. ii. p. 29.



P R O L O G U E.

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR;

And Spoken by MR. HARLEY,

*WHILE fears and hopes alternate thoughts suggest,
And now disturb, now soothe the Author's breast ;
While expectation breathes an awful pause,
Ere yet the ready hand the curtain draws,
Ere yet the action glows—I come a spy,
To cast around a reconnoit'ring eye.
Yet then, as I this fearful Pit explore,
Where Authors sometimes fall to rise no more,
Here when th' Adventurer dares you to the field,
If his fond efforts some small merit yield,
I've seen your gen'rous arm forbear the blow,
And raise to life and fame the grateful foe.*

*For you, the boist'rous inmates of the sky !
Bold is the man who dares your pow'r defy ;
With you confusion her loud compact forms,
You ride the clouds, and are yourselves the storms.
Yet have I seen you mitigate your rage,
And spare the Adventurer struggling on the Stage ;*

*If in some scenes (the rest tho' feebly done)
Unerring Nature own'd her genuine Son,
Your glowing soul has grasp'd the Author's cause;
And burl'd around the thunder of applause.*

*For you, ye glittering Amazonian train,
Whose power is dreaded on the critic plain !
Tho' marshal'd to the war by taste severe,
Yet meek indulgence follows in the rear :
And oft on beauty's cheek I've lov'd to trace,
Soft stealing down, the holy tear of grace.*

*Rais'd by the thoughts these soothing hopes create,
I'll bid the Bard come forth, and meet his fate,
The tyrant Terror from his breast erase,
Rush on the scene, and combat for your praise.*



CHARACTERS.

SIR ALEXANDER SEATON, *Mr. POPE.*

ARCHIBALD } *bis. Sons,* { *Mr. MIDDLETON.*
VALENTINE } { *Mr. HOLMAN.*

ANSELM, *a Monk,* *Mr. HARLEY.*

DONALDSON, *an Officer,* *Mr. MACREADY.*

ETHELBERTA, *Wife of* } *Mrs. POPE.*
Sir ALEXANDER, }

JULIANA, *Mrs. FAWCETT.*

HERALD, &c.

T H E

T H E
SIEGE OF BERWICK.

A C T T H E F I R S T.



Sir ALEXANDER, ARCHIBALD, VALENTINE.

SIR ALEXANDER.

IT is not action only that adorns.
The soldier's character, it is patience,
Calm and induring in the rugged hour
Of want, that forms the nobler part of duty :
You, my lov'd sons, and all your fellow-sufferers,
Have well that rigorous iron task perform'd.
But now a smoother train of hours advances ;
The truce, which at to-morrow's dawn takes place,
Will enable me from out the northern gate
To dismiss the women, the aged and the infirm,
Then disencumber'd of its useless numbers

B

This

THE SIEGE

This foe-encircled town shall raise its head ;
 The hand of scarceness shall no more dispense
 Her meagre morsel to th' exhausted soldier,
 But cheering competency shall provide
 The meal.

ARCHIBALD.

'Tis well ! yet then inform me, Sir,
 How you'll employ th' invaluable hours
 That still precede the truce ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

Our gallant men
 Have been severely tried, and worn with toil.

ARCHIBALD.

Their toil-enfeebled bodies still enclose
 The mounting spirit of unwearied vigor.

VALENTINE.

Prompt as the hawk to dart upon his prey.

ARCHIBALD.

The foe since yesterday appears to have lost
 Half of his wonted intrepidity.

VALENTINE.

That shower of arrows we pour'd down at eve
 Hath somewhat quench'd their ardor !

SIR ALEXANDER.

Be it so ;
 But tell me what is now your present purpose :
Methinks

Methinks that swelling to some bold design
Your bosom labours.—Speak, my Valentine.

V A L E N T I N E.

Command my elder brother, Sir, to speak.

S I R A L E X A N D E R,

Unfold then, Archibald, this mysterious something,
This painful secret that disturbs you both.

A R C H I B A L D.

Last night, as we reclin'd upon our couch,
Still talking o'er (as is our wonted manner)
The various hazard of the busy day,
We wish'd, we fondly wish'd, that ere the truce
Should intervene, some daring enterprize
Might be attempted under our direction :
Thus we convers'd in sacred confidence
Till as our weak'ning voices died away
We wearied into rest—'twas then an image——

V A L E N T I N E.

Mark, Sir, what now my brother will unfold.

A R C H I B A L D.

'Twash then an image rush'd upon my sight,
It shew'd as one of the angelic train,
A circling glory glitter'd o'er his head,
A smile benignant beautified his lip,
And thus he spoke—‘ Sons of the valiant Seaton,
Arise and hasten to the southern gate,

THE SIEGE

Thence dart upon the foe.'—The vision ceas'd
 And vanish'd into air! while a rude noise
 Like the fierce struggle of contending spears
 Suddenly waked us! Starting from my couch,
 And ere I cou'd communicate my dream,
 Valentine with impatient voice disclos'd
 The mutual vision.

VALENTINE.

'Twas as he relates ;
 By honor's winnow'd purity I swear
 The nightly visitation also came
 To me.

SIR ALEXANDER.

I hazard no impeachment of
 Your truth ; yet then, endearing children, tell me
 How can a prudent tender parent send
 His valiant sons to danger's precipice
 At the fantastic impulse of a dream?

ARCHIBALD.

In the old time we read that dreams have often
 Been the prophetic leaders to success.

VALENTINE.

Oh do not, Sir, with caution's chill restraint
 O'ershade the splendid purpose of our soul.

ARCHIBALD.

Let the bright vision be forgot, if that
 Offend you, and attend to reason's voice :

Does

OF BERWICK.

3

Does not the weary foe anticipate
Th' approaching truce, and guard negligently
The southern gate?

SIR ALEXANDER.

'Tis a mask'd neglect,
It is the couchant lion prompt to seize
Th' unwary prey—ah! trust not to his stern
Repose.

VALENTINE.

If danger still must check the current
Of enterprize, tell, tell me, Father, wherefore
You rear'd us in the hardy school of war?

ARCHIBALD.

The road to martial glory well thou know'st
Is not gay-sprinkled o'er with flowers, but broken
Helmets, shiver'd spears, and blood-stain'd arrows
Choak up th' aspiring path of fame's ascent.

VALENTINE.

To be restrain'd when proud occasion calls,
'Twere better thou hadst led me to some cloister,
Where holy peace resides, o'er-canopied
By antient roofs, that ever shade her from
The madd'ning sun-beams of ambition's sky.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Forbear to torture thus a parent's feelings.

ARCHIBALD.

THE SIEGE

ARCHIBALD.

Indulgent Father, rest assur'd we both
 Pay homage to the thought that now disturbs you ;
 But with th' experienced Melvil we have just
 Conferr'd.

SIR ALEXANDER.

And he undoubtedly contemn'd
 Your gaudy dream, that meteor of the brain.

VALENTINE.

'Twas not the meteor of a heated brain,
 It was a fun-beam of revealing Heaven,
 It was the sympathetic glow of two
 According minds.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Of this enough—What said
 Th' experienc'd Melvil ?

ARCHIBALD.

After due attention
 To our proposal, he first stamp'd it with
 The seal of his applause, and then added
 Arguments that embodied as it were
 Our enterprize, and brighten'd it with the
 Calm colouring of reason.

SIR ALEXANDER.

I will myself
 Confer with Melvil ; and if he has words

To

OF BERWICK.

7

To smooth the rugged doubts that vex my mind,
Think not, my valiant sons, I shall withhold
You from the object of your bold request

ARCHIBALD.

To keep unfullied the bright martial name
Of Seaton, is indeed my proudest wish.

VALENTINE.

And if thy Valentine might add his mite
To the rich treasury of his Father's fame,
He would be happy.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Wait till I return. [*Exit.*]

ARCHIBALD.

Excellent man ! his ardour to promote
Our cause, and his solicitude about
Our safety, combat and distract his will.

VALENTINE.

More active, warm, and forcible affection
Was ne'er embosom'd in a father's soul ;
And therefore much I fear that Melvil can't
Subdue his scruples.

ARCHIBALD.

Oft have I observ'd
That Melvil's clear illumin'd manly judgment

I

Posses

Possesses something like magnetic power,
Which still attracts opinion to his side.

VALENTINE.

May that attractive power be at this moment
Endued with double influence, that my Father
Withholding his restraint, I might unbounded
Spring against the foe!—This common praise
That's claim'd by every soldier, ill supplies
My starv'd and craving appetite of fame.

ARCHIBALD.

Endearing Valentine, think not that I
Reprove these flashes of an ardent mind;
But should your mounting wishes meet controul,
Wound not a Father's tender caution with
Reproach.

VALENTINE.

Sooner than wound his feeling mind
With sullen, splenetic, unduteous carriage,
I wou'd, like the Spartan boy (who silently
Endur'd the gnawing fox) conceal my sorrow,
Though, like the savage animal, it should
Prey upon my vitals.

ARCHIBALD.

Consider also
This warlike age will gratify your wishes
With many a future enterprize! The morn
Of life is now but breaking on thy youth.

VALENTINE.

OF BERWICK.

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VALENTINE.

Talk not to me of early youth : behold
Edward's brave son, whose age but equals mine—
Oh were I equal with him in renown !
Behold that boy on Cressy's wond'ring field
Reaping an immortal harvest, while I
Enveloped in obscurity—

ARCHIBALD.

Desist,

I hear some step approaching.

Enter DONALDSON.

VALENTINE.

'Tis my Father;
Ah, no ! 'tis Donaldson. Say, hast thou seen
The Governor ?

DONALDSON.

I saw him as I pass'd by
In close conference engag'd with Melvil.

VALENTINE.

Know'st thou the subject of their conference ?

DONALDSON.

There breathes an ignorant rumour of a sally,
Propos seems by Archibald and you.

C

ARCHI-

*THE SIEGE***ARCHIBALD.**

It is as you have darkly heard, and here
 Impatiently we wait the Governor's
 Return.

VALENTINE.

See, here he comes.

Enter Sir ALEXANDER.

Hail to my Father !

ARCHIBALD.

Sir, you appear disturbed.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Ah ! tell me, Archibald,
 Is't with a look of cheerfulness a parent
 Resigns his dutious children to the hazard
 Of a fearful enterprize ?

ARCHIBALD.

Yet then reflect,
 Melvil the military sage approves
 The enterprize.

SIR ALEXANDER.

But Melvil has no children,
 His smooth sail of honour meets no adverſe
 Gales to check its progress.—'Tis not thus with me:
 Say how ſhall I endure the keen reproofs

Of

O F B E R W I C K.

II

Of Ethelberta, when she is inform'd
That I have sent, without the imperious call
Of stern necessity, her darling children
To the path of danger?

V A L E N T I N E.

Speak not of danger,
'Tis the soldier's charter, his best privilege.

S I R A L E X A N D E R.

Something withholds my full consent,
And calls my judgment to severe account!
Forgive this trembling caution in a parent.

V A L E N T I N E.

Had England's warlike king suppress'd his son's
Ascending soul, on her proud list of victories
We should not have found the name of Cressy!

A R C H I B A L D.

• 'Twas on the summit of a neigb'ring hill
The father stood, and saw his youthful son
Oppose the pride of France; and when the Earls
Of Warwick and of Oxford sent a herald,
To claim immediate succour from the king—

V A L E N T I N E.

Did not the king reply, Go tell the lords
Who sent you, that while my boy's alive

C 2

They

They will require my aid in vain: the glory
Of this great day shall be his own?

SIR ALEXANDER.

Enough!

Your arguments prevail, and you have won me
To your request.—Go, join the skilful Melvil,
The Nestor of the war, and strictly mark
His words and well-weigh'd counsel—first receive
The anxious Father's blessing. (*Embraces his sons.*)

May that Power

Who oft hath shielded me in many a combat,
Oh! may that guardian, kind, benignant Angel
Now hover o'er my children!

(*Leads them to the door, and returns.*)

Donaldson,

This is an awful moment for a Father!

DONALDSON.

Think not so deeply, Sir, nor feed your mind
With busy tort'ring vain surmises; think
How often you've encounter'd perils imminent,
And still return'd with glory.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Unavailing

Remembrance! rear'd as I have almost been
In storms of battle, say what paternal
Bosom will not feel a warm renew'd affection
For two such sons staged to the front of danger?

DONALDSON.

OF BERWICK.

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DONALDSON.

But should not Ethelberta be informed?

SIR ALEXANDER.

Ah! there you probe my bosom's tender part:
No, Donaldson, the mother must not know
The gathering storm that's brooding o'er her sons;
Her quick'ning apprehension would outrun
The deed, and picture to itself images
That would distract her.—'Tis my duty, my
Religion, still to shield her mind from all
That may assail it.

DONALDSON.

Many a time have
I listen'd to the splendid narrative
Of Ethelberta's virtues.

SIR ALEXANDER.

From the happy hour
I first call'd her mine, unto this moment,
She has with unremitting fortitude
Attended me through many a rugged day.

DONALDSON.

I think that England triumphs in her birth.

SIR ALEXANDER.

At those fam'd tournaments that Edward held
At Windsor, did I first behold that matchless
Woman,

Woman, tho' attractive, yet not dazzling :
 As looks the softer green amidst the radiant
 Colours of the vernal bow, so Ethelberta
 Seem'd 'mid the circling flush of British beauties.
 — This gorgeous castle, and its proud delights,
 The daughter of Earl Nevil willingly
 Resign'd, to share with me the perils of
 The late crusade : This faithful Wife, this soothing
 Companion of my way, still smooth'd the harrow'd
 Walk of war— Ev'n as the wall-flower rears its form,
 And smiles and flourishes 'midst tombs and ruins,
 So Ethelberta's warm affection grew
 'Mid sickness, want, fatigue, distress, and danger.

Enter ANSELM.

Hail, holy father ! what dost thou report ?

ANSELM.

With hasty step I come, Sir, to acquaint you
 That the bold enterprize is well prepar'd ;
 Along the subterraneous windings did
 The gallant troops advance, 'till they approach'd
 The chapel of St. Andrew, near the gate
 That issues to the field : here paus'd the band—
 And then in sacred silence lowly bending
 Dedicated themselves unto their country.

SIR ALEXANDER.

What follow'd ?

ANSELM.

OF BERWICK.

25

A N S E L M.

Then with solemn voice I utter'd
Warm from my throbbing heart, the benediction
That is appointed in the hour of danger.

S I R ALEXANDER.

Yet tell me what directions then were given?

A N S E L M.

It was agreed that your two sons, attended
By a chosen few, should rush upon the foe,
While Melvil with a greater number should,
Taking a wide circling path, fall on the rear.
Brave Melvil first began the silent march:
Then did your sons lead forth their gallant men
Thro' the deep awful gloom—the signal for
The onset is to be the convent bell
That tolls at midnight.

S I R ALEXANDER.

Wherefore did I yield me
To their wild request? Oh say, is 't yet too late?
The leave they wrested from me I may still
Recall.

A N S E L M.

The die is cast, and you must wait
Th' event: yet elevate your mind to hope;
For me I augur well of this bold enterprize.

S I R

SIR ALEXANDER.

But as a Father shou'd I not have been
More cautious, more reserved?

ANSELM.

The sacred poet
Says, Children are as arrows in the hand
Of a giant, to perform his purpose.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Your words, good Anselm, animate my hopes,
And lift me to my wonted confidence.
In Heaven.—Did'st thou not say, the convent bell
At midnight was th' appointed signal for
The onset?

ANSELM.

Ev'n so!

SIR ALEXANDER.

See Ethelberta comes;
Farewell—'tis meet that now ye both retire.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter ETHELBERTA.

ETHELBERTA.

I hope I'm no intruder; if I am,
My warm solicitude for you must plead
Indulgence.

OF BERWICK.

17

SIR ALEXANDER

Ever most welcome !

ETHELBERTA.

Methinks

You look all harassed, pale and overcome ;
Tis not surprising—but I'm told the foe
Anticipates the truce, by retreating
To some distance.—Wherfore do you not
Retire to rest ? 'Tis late, 'tis almost midnight.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Midnight, did'st thou say ?

ETHELBERTA.

Sir, you seem alarm'd ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

What recent subject is there to alarm me ?

ETHELBERTA.

Forgive my busy fond anxiety,
That catches as it were at airy symptoms.—
Where are my sons ? tell me when I may see them ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

I hope to-morrow.

ETHELBERTA.

Wherfore dost thou only
Hope ? Does not the truce take place to-morrow ?

D

What

What should then prevent?— *(The bell tolls.)*

Oh! what transports you?

'Twas but the wonted midnight bell, that calls
The holy fathers to their pray'rs; relieve,
Relieve me from this painful ignorance,
And let thine Ethelberta share the pang
That rends thy heart.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Dear Wife, forbear to question me—

ETHELBERTA.

Will you not retire to rest, for sure you
Need it much?

SIR ALEXANDER.

Perchance I may.—Directions
Of highest import I have first to give!

ETHELBERTA.

Farewell—do not tarry long.—Care and sorrow
Mingle on thy brow.—Farewell!—my warmest
Blessing to my sons!—

[Exit.]

SIR ALEXANDER.

That blessing was pronounc'd
By her whose sons perchance are now no more—

Enter DONALDSON.

Well Donaldson, what hast thou to relate?

DONALDSON,

DONALDSON.

By some perfidious means the foe, appris'd
Of the intended sally, were prepar'd to meet
The troops that Melvil led.—O'erpower'd by
numbers,
He and most of his brave train lie slaughter'd
On the plain—As for your sons—

SIR ALEXANDER.

Ah! what of them?

DONALDSON.

In warmest combat they are now engag'd!

SIR ALEXANDER.

I'll fly to their assistance— (*Draws his sabre.*)

DONALDSON.

Let me first—

SIR ALEXANDER.

Cease your vain talking, I must speed away
To save my sons, or perish in their cause.

[*Exeunt.*]



End of the FIRST ACT.



ACT THE SECOND.



Enter ETHELBERTA and JULIANA.

ETHELBERTA.

SAY, what can be the cause of their deserting me ?
I have not since the truce began beheld
The Governor, nor have I yet embrac'd
My children ! they whose dutiful affection
I have until this present hour experienc'd !
Whence comes it they defraud me of their cheering
Presence ?

JULIANA.

'Tis busines of some great moment
Perchance delays them.

ETHELBERTA.

Feed me not with vain
Pretexts ; their presence only can assuage
My starv'd and ravenous longing ! wild conception
Peoplers the void of absence with many
Ghastly and terrific forms.

JULIANA.

OF BERWICK.

JULIANA.

Shall I withdraw
In order to investigate the cause ?

ETHELBERTA.

No, Juliana, you must not desert me,
I am too wretched and unfit for solitude !
Why do you send your view to yonder portal.

(*Juliana retires a few steps,*
and then returns.)

JULIANA.

Now cast away your fears ; behold, behold !
The Governor approaches.

Enter SIR ALEXANDER.

ETHELBERTA.

Your presence
Is as the sun unto the darken'd landscape :
Wherefore hast thou linger'd thus ? Oh, tell me
Where are my children ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

They are well.

ETHELBERTA.

Yet why
Do they delay to bless a mother's sight ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

'Tis proper now I should reveal.

ETHELBERTA.

ETHELBERTA.

Reveal !

You've then some fearful secret to unfold.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Dear Ethelberta, be not thus alarm'd !
 Already have I said our boys are well.
 Last night a sally was propos'd. Archibald
 And Valentine entreated much to lead
 The onset.

ETHELBERTA.

And you yielded to their entreaty ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

The subtle foe by some dark perfidy
 Had early notice of the deep-laid scheme,
 And were too well prepar'd.

ETHELBERTA.

My blood runs cold.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Ah, rather let it glow at my recital :
 Your sons have gain'd the warrior's best reward,
 Unfullied fame. Three times did their small force
 Drive back their triple-number'd foes ; at length,
 By their encreasing powers subdued (with nine
 Of their brave men remaining) they submitted
 To be captives.

ETHEL-

ETHELBERTA.

Say, who first suggested
This rash enterprize ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

Melvil applauded
What my sons propos'd ; and to the energy
With which he utter'd his approving thought
Did I reluctantly give my assent.

ETHELBERTA.

Curs'd be old Melvil for his rash approval !

SIR ALEXANDER.

Spare your resentment, and revere the dead ;
Fall'n is his valiant arm, to rise no more.

ETHELBERTA.

Then peace be to his soul ! Let me retain
A grateful sense to Heav'n that my lov'd children
Are not, as Melvil, number'd with the slain ;
The los's of those dear boys would be to me
As if the spring were blotted from the year.
Come, Juliana, let us to our customed
Visitation of the sick and wounded.

[Exit Ethelberta and Juliana.

Enter ANSELM.

ANSELM.

A herald from the foe is just arriv'd,
And waits your orders for admission.

SIR

THE SIEGE**SIR ALEXANDER.**

Let him be admitted.

Enter HERALD.

THE HERALD.

Sir, this letter,
Of high import, I'm order'd to deliver
Into your hands only.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Retire awhile :
In some few moments come for my reply.

(Reads to himself.)

ANSELM.

Methinks you look disturb'd ! Say, what can be
The drift of this important note ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

Attend ! *(reads aloud.)*

“ Complaints have reach'd me from my court, as if
“ I linger'd in subjecting your proud town :
“ To these complaints strong menaces are added !
“ I therefore summon you to surrender,
“ Or else your sons shall rue your stubbornness :
“ I will erect two pillars near the tower
“ From whence your crowding arrows gall us most ;
“ To these two pillars shall your sons be chain'd ;
“ Expos'd to the whole tempest of the war.”

A N S E L M.

The blackest fiend in hell conceiv'd that thought,
And breath'd it on his mind.

SIR ALEXANDER.

I know him well,
It suits the native disposition of the man.

Enter ETHELBERTA.

ETHELBERTA.

Ah! wonder not I hastily return:
I'm told a Herald from the camp is come—
What tidings of my sons?

SIR ALEXANDER.

Peruse this note.

(*She rends.*)

ETHELBERTA.

Say, what dost thou intend to do ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

My duty.

ETHELBERTA.

Is 't then a duty to destroy your children?
To rend affection from your inmost breast ;
Uproot the thoughts of pity as they grow ;
Embowel nature of her hallow'd feelings ?
And to a mother date you this avow ?

E

SIR

THE SIEGE

SIR ALEXANDER.

I dare avow what honour bids me do,

ETHELBERTA.

The untam'd Arab, who exists on plunder,
 Lets fall his booty to assist his child !
 But you, whom polish'd manners should adorn,
 Whose pure religion wears a softer feature,
 Do you reject the impulse of compassion,
 For the stern morals of imagin'd honour ?

Enter HERALD.

HERALD.

Sir, the time urges, what is your reply ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

Go, tell your savage, and blood-thirsty General,
 The sacred oath I utter'd to my country
 And to my royal master, when I was
 Exalted to the station I now hold,
 Contains my answer.—Sir, you may return.

ETHELBERTA.

Stay one short moment, hear a mother plead :
 Tho' dead to pity, riches may perchance
 Allure his mind ! I've jewels of high value —

*(Sir Alexander makes a signal to
 the Herald, who retires.)*

He goes, he heeds not what I say ; my sons
 Are then condemn'd without resource. Enjoy,

(turning

(turning to Sir Alexander.)

Enjoy this philosophic victory,
 This conquest, this cold triumph o'er all feeling—
 Domestic pity, conjugal affiance,
 Fatherly endearment, are by you profan'd !

SIR ALEXANDER.

What does this mean? dare you assert I do
 Not love my children?

ETHELBERTA.

Say, where are the proofs?
 Is yielding up your sons without a conflict,
 Without resorting to the prompt expedient
 Affection wou'd have flown to? Is resigning
 Your sons, without the interposing a short
 Delay, without a pause, without inventing
 Some pious artifice; are these the proofs
 Of your paternal kindness? Evidence
 Like this would not be admitted in the court
 Of Nature.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Cease this idle declamation!
 Respect, respect the great, the solemn trial,
 To which my pure allegiance now is call'd!
 I see the desolating hour approach,
 Like the dark storm that thickens as it fails!
 It is the woman's privilege to weep
 And utter her complaints: to man belongs
 The majesty of grief! yet not the less
 Does the fond parent warm this bosom:

Ev'n while proud honour and relentless duty
 Seem to command the function of my soul,
 I've that within that tells me I'm a father,

ETHELBERTA.

Thus the pale cheek of hungry fame is flush'd
 And rudded o'er with the false glow of duty,

ANSLEM.

Make not the bitter cup he's doomed to drink
 Still more bitter by the infusions of reproach.

ETHELBERTA.

May not the broken-hearted mother speak;
 May not her madd'ning sorrow still attempt
 To snatch her children from destruction?

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

I come to pour glad tidings on your ear!
 Your sons—

ETHELBERTA.

What of my sons?

OFFICER.

They are return'd:
 Relenting, as 'tis thought, of his intention,
 The General has restor'd them to your wishes.

ETHEL.

ETHELBERTA.

Ah! tell me where you saw them?

OFFICER.

Ent'ring at
The southern gate, amidst th' applauding multitude!
They bade me hasten to your presence with
The news of their return.

ETHELBERTA.

Wherefore do they
Linger thus?

OFFICER.

Methinks I hear their foot-steps—

Enter ARCHIBALD and VALENTINE.

ETHELBERTA.

What glorious vision meets my raptur'd eyes!
(Runs to embrace them.)
This sudden joy, this unimagin'd heaven,
Transports me beyond all pow'r of utterance.—

SIR ALEXANDER.

Your presence, my lov'd children, smooths
The rugged conflict in my breast.—Whence comes
This change of counsel in the tyrant's mind?

ETHELBERTA.

Ah ! rather tell me where, where is the joy
That ought to harmonise with ours ? Archibald,
Your down-cast look portends some dread intel-
ligence :
And you, my Valentine, where is thy wonted
Gaiety ?

ARCHIBALD.

I have of high importance
Something to communicate to my Father.

ETHELBERTA.

May not I be present at the interview ?

ARCHIBALD.

What I'm going to unfold will distress you.

ETHELBERTA.

No, no ! your mutual safety is sufficient
To bear me up against this new calamity !
But wherefore do you weep ?

ARCHIBALD.

These tears I shed
Spring from affection, not from fear.—I'll die
Worthy of such parents.

VALEN-

VALENTINE.

So will I !

ETHELBERTA.

Wherefore,

Wherefore do ye talk of death ?

ARCHIBALD.

With a mockery

Of pity does the General send us back :
One of us must return to be the victim
Of his cruelty.

ETHELBERTA.

Oh ! never.

ARCHIBALD.

We're bound

By honour's tie, the soldier's strongest chain ;
One must return : and unappall'd we wait
(turning to Sir Alexander.)

For your decision.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Ah ! what Father can
Decide of two affectionate and duteous
Children, which shall be led to slaughter ? Say,
Was I to raise in awful thought the balance
Of my affection, and cou'd judgment see

One-

One side prevail, still sacred nature's hand
Would join and equalize the trembling scales.

VALENTINE (*to ETHELBERTA.*)

Be comforted.

ETHELBERTA.

Oh! my dear Valentine.

(*Falls on his neck.*)

ANSELM.

I think all this is a mere stratagem
To lengthen out the truce.—Allow me, Sir,
To hasten to the General's tent; there will
I urge with glowing words my suit,
There paint the infamy that must involve him,
If, thus profaning the hallow'd feelings
Of Parents—

VALENTINE.

Holy father! 'twou'd become
Thee better to assuage, support with comfort's
Lenient voice, this drooping mother, than to
Interfere with what regards my brother's
Honour and my own.

ETHELBERTA.

I'll write to the General
In words of soothing power, in terms of energy,
Such as the mother's throbbing heart conceives.

VALEN-

VALENTINE.

No letter must be written, for 'twou'd seem
Our dictating, and would shew like cowardice.

SIR ALEXANDER.

There spoke my valiant son.

ARCHIBALD.

Our mutual dignity
Forbids, abhors all interposition.

ETHELBERTA.

Then I have lost my children.

VALENTINE.

That follows not ;
He who is first in years, in skill, experience,
He must be spar'd, the general cause demands him.

ARCHIBALD.

What says the hasty Valentine ?

VALENTINE.

Command
Your rising indignation, I'll explain.—
Allow us, Father, for some few moments,
To confer alone, that free from all restraint
I may to Archibald disclose my mind,
And utter arguments that may subdue

F

His

His reason to my ardent wish, and thus
Prevent th' extinction of our family.

ARCHIBALD.

Perish to the root the name of Seaton,
And let oblivion's night o'ershade the proud
Exploits of our long ancestry, ere I
Consent to that which must degrade and shrink
Me in my own esteem !

VALENTINE.

I mean not that,

SIR ALEXANDER.

Come, Ethelberta, let us for a while
Retire, and leave them to confer alone,

ETHELBERTA.

Well the high theme of your discourse I know,
It is a contest for the palm of death :
But in this glorious conflict still remember
What is due to your afflicted Mother,
If any plan, expedient, or device,
Allied to honour, should suggest itself ;
If any beam should pierce this awful gloom,
Admit its sacred influence on your mind,
And save me from despair.

*(Exit with ANSELM, JULIANA,
and SIR ALEXANDER.)*

VALEN-

VALENTINE.

Fear is no inmate of thy glowing breast;
Yet then reflect that other thoughts than those
That courage breathes must sometimes regulate
A soldier's conduct. Say, hast thou not heard
That mercy, resignation, are the nobler
Duties of a soldier?

ARCHIBALD.

Where is now that
Mercy claim'd? where call'd for? mercy on whom?

VALENTINE.

Mercy on your Parents, and on your country.

ARCHIBALD.

This puerile declamation moves me not.

VALENTINE.

I speak the language of a mind sincere,
To one who is my friend as well as brother,
For whom my partial fondness ne'er was doubted.

ARCHIBALD.

He loves me not who does not love my fame!
Was I to yield to your ill-tim'd suggestion,
Wou'd not each finger mark me as I pass,
As one who skulks behind the privilege
Of eldership to save himself from death?

I feel dishonour as I feel a wound—
 The fatal spot to which we both aspire,
 Is glory's prize, is honour's awful station,
 And I now claim it as my sacred birth-right.

VALENTINE.

I contend no longer.

ARCHIBALD.

Let me hasten,
 Fly to my Father to proclaim the news,
 That Valentine at length consents to live.

VALENTINE.

Allow me one short moment, and be calm :
 Say, wilt thou, with an avarice of fame,
 Demand exclusively the meed of glory ?
 Wilt thou pursue the path that leads to death,
 And leave thy faithful Valentine behind ?

ARCHIBALD.

Cease, generous brother, or thou 'lt break my heart—

VALENTINE.

When first I quitted childhood's lowly vale,
 Eager with you I climb'd youth's arduous height,
 Whence greater scenes expanded on my view ;
 Still our pursuits, consenting to one plan,
 Our lives like wedded streams united roll'd ;
 And will you now disturb the sacred tide,
 And bid the kindred waves disparting run ?

ARCHI -

ARCHIBALD.

'Tis as you say, in us was ever found
 The sympathetic union of the mind,
 The harmony of affection and design.

VALENTINE.

And wou'd it not be sacrilege to tear
 Our souls asunder?—Mark my firm resolve,
 I will attend thee to the fatal spot,
 And share an equal destiny with thee.

ARCHIBALD.

I yield, I bow to thy sublimer mind.

VALENTINE.

Let 's haste away, lest Ethelberta shou'd
 Return, and with her tears unman our purpose.

ARCHIBALD.

Agreed—We'll hasten to our mutual doom,
 Co-equals at the hallow'd shrine of danger.

VALENTINE.

Will not the spirits of our valiant ancestry
 Lean from their golden thrones on high, well pleas'd
 While thus *(Encircling his brother.)*
 we march undaunted to our fate.

One heart—

ARCHI-

THE SIEGE

ARCHIBALD.

One cause—

VALENTINE.

One ruin, and one fame !

[*Exeunt.*]*End of the SECOND ACT.*

ACT



ACT THE THIRD.



Enter ETHELBERTA and JULIANA.

ETHELBERTA.

FLED to the camp ! Both fled ! Impossible !

JULIANA.

Pure honour breathing on their bosom—

ETHELBERTA.

Fled,

Without one parting word !

JULIANA.

The great trial

They are call'd to claims their whole attention.

ETHELBERTA.

Has then the phantom glory steel'd my children
Into savages ?—Not one endearing
Word to soothe their fond afflicted Mother ?

JULIANA.



THE SIEGE

JULIANA.

The rigorous duty of their situation—

ETHELBERTA.

What duty is more pressing or more sacred
Than that a Mother claims? It rises out
Of Nature's bosom, summon'd by the voice
Of Heaven!

JULIANA.

Their better judgment held them from
Your presence; well, full well they knew the sight
Of two sons hast'ning to untimely death
Wou'd rend your heart.

ETHELBERTA.

It must be so, it was,
It was their love that urg'd them to avoid me!
The cloud of dark surmise that here was gathering
Begins to melt in air! and my full heart
Expands to all its wonted warm affection.

JULIANA.

To this affection join a confidence
That all may yet be well,

ETHELBERTA.

I dare not cast
A meeting glance upon th' approaching hour.—
Cou'd I but raise my sinking mind to the
Faint hope, that the arrows haply might not

Reach my children!—That the tyrant may
 Relent of his fell purpose! Vain endeavour!—
 Each way I look I meet despair.—Yet now—
 A thought possesses me—Indulge my weakness—
 Ah! pity the disease that flies to such
 A remedy—I've heard a skilful sorceress
 Does in this town reside, whose magic power
 Unfolds the future to her trembling visitant—

JULIANA.

It is as you report, and many a hapless
 Virgin, many a distressful mother,
 Have consulted her.

ETHELBERTA.

'Tis said she rivals
 The weird sisterhood of ancient days,
 While o'er her mind pale prophecy hangs flutter-
 ing,
 The dread vaunt-courier of futurity—
 Perchance this deeply-skill'd magician may
 Transport my ignorant fears beyond th' event.

JULIANA.

Yet say, was she by her exploring art
 To raise your ignorant fears to horrid certainties—

ETHELBERTA.

Better to know the worse, than thus to live
 In apprehension, unrelenting agony!—
 Can't thou inform me where the sorceress dwells?

G

JULIANA.

THE SIEGE

JULIANA.

Her lonely cell is seen not far from hence,
 Amidst the ruins of an ancient cloister,
 Upon the burial ground ! There on a seat
 Of ebony, o'erspread with human skulls,
 She exerciseth her tremendous function.

ETHELBERTA.

Whence does the hag derive her daring mission ?
 Is 't from on high, or from the caves of hell ?
 Does she not lift her impious hand to rend
 The sanctuary-veil that hangs 'tween men and
 angels ?
 And on the breast of heaven she sends a glance
 Profane !

JULIANA.

This deep reflection will avert
 Your anxious mind from its new-form'd purpose.

ETHELBERTA.

Let me be wretched, let me not be impious :
 Never will I tread the path that leads to
 Her unhallow'd cell.—Another thought occurs,
 Which meets my heart's consent—Come, come
 what may,
 I'll go in person to the hostile camp,
 There, rushing on the rude barbarian,
 I will demand my children.

JULIANA.

Vain, vain project !

ETHEL-

ETHELBERTA.

He'll hear my plaintive voice, he'll see these eyes
In tears.

JULIANA.

Th' unfeeling wretch will mock those tears.

ETHELBERTA.

Affection will endue my speech with eloquence;
The monster self will soften at warm nature
Pleading for her darling sons.

JULIANA.

Consider

What dangers you'll encounter, to what insults
You there may be expos'd : 'tis likely you
May be detain'd a captive, and immur'd
Within the precincts of a lonesome dungeon.

ETHELBERTA.

Talk not to me of dangers, I despise them.
Say, hast thou not beheld the bold sea-eagle,
When her dear young one from the rock hath fall'n,
Descend undaunted to the roaring main,
Dash with her throbbing breast the waves asunder,
To snatch the nestling from the ravenous shark!
And wouldst thou have me pause and hesitate
To act the mother's part? Let us retire,
And seek for Anselm to attend
And guide my footsteps to the tyrant's tent.

[*Exeunt.*

G 2

Enter

THE SIEGE

Enter Sir ALEXANDER and ANSELM.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Yes, Anselm, I confess I glory in
 These children—their abrupt departure wakes
 At once my wonder and delight! Say, has
 It not a relish of the antique manners,
 Some proud resemblance of the Roman mind?

ANSELM.

This mutual dedication of themselves
 To certain death will ornament our annals.

SIR ALEXANDER.

As torrents feed the river, so my sons
 Swell the strong current of my country's fame.

ANSELM.

You also share your part in this sublime
 Transaction.

SIR ALEXANDER.

The renown is their's, and mine
 Is the distress.—My scene in this deep drama
 Is to bid my archers shoot their arrows
 Where my defenceless sons will be expos'd
 To their full rage.—Alas! I fear, good father,
 I have not virtue equal to the task.

ANSELM.

Virtue is ever found superior to

The

The rugged task ; and, like the water-plant,
Ascends still higher than the swelling flood.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Was ever father so severely tried ?

ANSELM.

Image to yourself that you are acting
In sight of angels and immortal spirits,
And thro' the scenery that darkens round
Look up, as to the sun that breaks the cloud,
Look up unto th' approving smile of Heav'n !

SIR ALEXANDER.

I sometimes think the tyrant will relent.

ANSELM.

He 's not of English birth.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Of that you may be certain:
Humanity adorns the English soldier ;
It is the wholesome gale that ventilates
Their heart, from the low subaltern up to
The royal youth who now in Gallia leads
His valiant band—

ANSELM.

From Norway is he not,
This wretch who outrages a parent's feelings ?

SIR

SIR ALEXANDER.

Ev'n so.—A pirate on the northern seas,
 His skill and matchless courage lifted him
 To fame: and being by distress of weather
 Driv'n on the English coast, the warlike Edward,
 Dazzled by his enterprizing spirit,
 Gave him to command the troops that now invest us.

ANSELM.

But tell me, has your sons' abrupt departure
 Yet reach'd the ear of hapless Ethelberta?

SIR ALEXANDER.

I know not that.—I must not now approach
 Her presence; her unbounded sorrow would
 Ill suit the frame of mind that I must now
 Acquire!—Go, holy father, and dispense
 The balm of comfort to her bleeding soul—
 I must confer with Donaldson.

[*Exit ANSELM.*

Enter DONALDSON.

DONALDSON.

Your commands have been attended to, and
 Now the town is disencumber'd of its
 Numbers—The wide northern gate recoiling,
 Pour'd forth a length'ning train.—The aged war-
 riors

Pas'd

Pass'd on in mournful silence.—This dismission,
Which mark'd their inutility, appear'd
To humble and degrade them.

SIR ALEXANDER.

'Tis a cruel
But necessary order on my part—
Yet then these aged and once active men
May haply in a few short days return,
And then resume their wonted occupations,
Habits and customs, which they now forego—
But never shall I meet with comfort more—
My sons ! my sons !

DONALDSON.

Next in long order mov'd
A female band, while many a pensive wife
Threw back a frequent glance of fond regard.

SIR ALEXANDER.

'Tis well.—Your diligence demands my thanks,
The truce will in two hours expire.—I must
Prepare me for the sad, the solemn task
Imperious duty has impos'd upon me.—
'Tis time the men ascend th' embattled walls,
In act to hurl the arrowy war below.

DONALDSON.

I left the men assembling in the square.

SIR

SIR ALEXANDER.

Oh ! wou'd that, with the safety of this town,
 Which to my latest moment I'll defend,
 I might include the safety of my children. [Exit.]

SCENE, *the Enemy's Camp.*

Enter ETHELBERTA and ANSELM.

SENTINEL to ETHELBERTA.

Arrest your daring footsteps !

ETHELBERTA.

Your uplifted
 Weapon frights not her, to whose misfortunes
 Death were welcome.—I am Ethelberta.

(*The Sentinel returns the
 sabre into the scabbard.*)

Haply in some far distant hamlet sits
 Your mother brooding o'er your absence, all
 In tears : Oh ! think of her, and lead me to
 My sons.

SENTINEL.

Beneath yon tent the captive youths
 Abide.

E T H E L B E R T A.

Inform your General, that the wretched
Ethelberta humbly begs an audience.

[*Exit Sentinel.*]

(*As ETHELBERTA and ANSELM
approach the tent ARCHIBALD
and VALENTINE rush out.*)

E T H E L B E R T A.

Marvel not at my appearance, my bleeding
Bosom demanded this sad interview.

A R C H I B A L D.

We're ever bound to you for this new proof
Of your affection.

V A L E N T I N E.

Have you seen the General?

E T H E L B E R T A.

I've ask'd a conference—I wait the answer.

V A L E N T I N E.

Be sure you let him know that we did not
Urge or prompt you to demand an audience.

E T H E L B E R T A.

Is it then criminal in me to own
A Mother's feelings?

H

A R C H I.

ARCHIBALD.

It is beneath the dignity
Of Ethelberta to confer with him.

ETHELBERTA.

Say, what dignity belongs to a wretch
Like me?

VALENTINE.

His ear is steel'd against compassion,
Nor do we wish to live.

ETHELBERTA.

Why, Valentine,
This contempt of life? would you not live to
Save me from distraction?—Is the cruelty
That breathes within the General's tent
Contagious? are my children grown insensible
To their afflicted mother?

VALENTINE (*Embracing her knees.*)

Think not so
Unjustly of us.

ETHELBERTA.

Oh! I think you both
Love me, or I shou'd wish to be the dust
Beneath your feet,

Exiter

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

The General now in council
Waits your attendance.

[*Exeunt ETHELBERTA, ANSELM,*
and OFFICER.

VALENTINE.

Sooner would the sea-cliff
Stoop to the sinking mariner, than will
The tyrant bend to her imploring voice ;
I mean his mercy will not reach us both.
What if Ethelberta shou'd return, and
Bring with her commands for your releasement ?

ARCHIBALD.

I wou'd reject the despicable mercy.
Has not our mutual vow to Heav'n ascended ?
Yes, brother, both must be releas'd, or both
Consign'd to death !

Enter OFFICER.

OFFICER.

The General bids me lead
You to the fatal spot, with orders that
You should immediately be fasten'd to
The summit of the pillars.

ARCHIBALD and VALENTINE.

We obey. [Exeunt.

SCENE.—*The place where pillars are erected; men with ropes, &c.*

FIRST MAN.

I relish not this barb'rous employment ;
It pains me to behold these ligaments,
With which we soon must bind the valiant youths.

SECOND MAN.

'Tis said the Mother now is with the General,
Imploring for her sons.

FIRST MAN.

I fear in vain !
Behold, they now approach.

*Enter ARCHIBALD, VALENTINE, OFFICER
and SOLDIERS.*

With great reluctance.
Do I perform this office.

ARCHIBALD.

My good friend,
Discharge your duty : leave the rest to Heaven !

ETHELBERTA, *behind the scenes.*
Lead, lead me to those dear unfortunate sons.

Enter

Enter ETHELBERTA and ANSELM.

ETHELBERTA.

Inhuman wretches ! check your dreadful office,
This sight appals me.

ARCHIBALD.

Still, oh still be comforted !
We suffer more for your sake than our own.

ETHELBERTA.

Was it for this I rear'd you with such care ?
Was it for this I watch'd your waking virtues,
And kindled at the dawn of your celestial mind ?

VALENTINE.

We were born to die.

ETHELBERTA.

Had gradual illness
Stol'n on you as ye faded in my arms,
Or had ye fall'n in battle, then I shou'd,
Like many, many more unfortunate mothers,
Have mournfully submitted ; but this outrage,
This indignity —

VALENTINE.

Affects me not, I am
Proud to fall in such a cause.

ETHEL

THE SIEGE

ETHELBERTA, to ANSELM.

Did I not
Fall at the tyrant's feet ; did I not bathe
Them with my tears ? Like the unheeding rock
He stood unmov'd. The stranger Pity knew not
The dark avenue to his heart.

ANSELM.

The king of terrors,
Death, comes like a friendly angel
In a noble cause.

ARCHIBALD.

'Tis as the holy
Father says. The cause for which we die brightens
The darken'd hour : it is the cause that dignifies
Those ignominious instruments ; that turns
These fatal pillars into pyramids
Proclaiming our eternal fame. .

ETHELBERTA.

Who would
Not glory in such children ? Yes, ye are
My boast, my honour, my delight. I first led
Your infant footsteps to the path of virtue ;
Indulge the fond idea, haply this
Sublime enthusiasm flows from me.

VALENTINE.

Speak ever thus, and be the Heroine
Of this conflicting hour.

ARCHIBALD.

Methought ! as thus
You spoke, a current of new ardour gush'd
Upon my throbbing heart.

ETHELBERTA.

Be not deceiv'd,
The momentary gleam of triumph's past ;
To glory's touch succeeds tormenting fear,
And Nature gives me up to grief again.

Enter OFFICER.

OFFICER.

The General bids me urge you to retire.

ETHELBERTA.

Does he prohibit this short interview ?
This last dear horror of a sad farewell ?

(Leans overpower'd upon ANSELM.)

OFFICER.

The General also says, that one of these
Youths may return, and that the choice remains
With you.

ETHELBERTA. *(Suddenly raising up her head.)*

Ah ! were I to absolve the life

of

THE SIEGE

Of one, say by that act should I not condemn
The other to the fate that threatens him ?

OFFICER.

Reflect, that by these means you will prevent
Th' entire extinction of your name.

ETHELBERTA.

Your reasoning
Touches not a mother's breast.—While I behold
My sons as now they stand before me, and
Recal their virtues, their invariable
Affection tow'rds their mother, and the concord
Of their congenial minds, the interweaving
Harmony of colouring, that composes
The texture of their mutual life, my heart
Blends, and unites the two, and my fond eyes
Behold but one dear son !

(ARCHIBALD and VALENTINE
throw themselves at her feet, while
ETHELBERTA hangs over them.)

ARCHIBALD (*rising.*)

Kind, pitying father,
We intrust her to your care : Oh comfort her !

ANSELM.

Mark this hallow'd symbol of our dread belief :

(*Holding up the cross that*
hangs at his side.)

By

By this I swear I will administer
 To her relief, and wait upon her sorrow,
 And shed upon the fest'ring wound of grief
 That Gilead balm, Religion only can
 Supply : from thence alone can comfort flow.

ETHELBERTA.

Who talks of comfort ? Say, will not these pillars
 Rise to my mind in every place, to frighten
 Comfort from me ? In such a state, comfort
 Wou'd be impiety, leave, leave me with
 Despair. Oh ! would to Heav'n that in this conflict
 Of life and sorrow, sorrow might prevail,
 That I might fall death-smitten on this spot,
 And in one grave be buried with my sons !

OFFICER.

The time expires, the truce will shortly end,
 The war will be renew'd, and from yon town
 The arrows then will fly.

ETHELBERTA.

To pierce my children—
 Tort'ring madness harbours in the thought.

OFFICER.

That devious path-way leads not to the town.

ETHELBERTA.

Forgive, I was a moment scarce myself,

I

And

And still a dimness hangs across my sight.
Where are my sons? *(they go up to her.)*

Forbear, forbear to weep,
I see my presence but enfeebles them:
Tis cruelty to linger, then resolv'd
I tear myself away. Oh! God of mercy,
Spread o'er my children thy protecting shield !

[*Exit with ANSEL M.*



End of the THIRD ACT.



ACT



A C T THE F O U R T H.



S C E N E.—*The Archers mounted on the walls,
expecting the word of command.*

Enter SIR ALEXANDER, JULIANA, DONALDSON.

SIR ALEXANDER, to DONALDSON.

T O your command do I entrust those archers ;
I'll thro' the subterraneous passage with
A chosen number issue on the plain !
My bosom burns to meet the tyrant, and
Provoke him to a single combat. How
Is he distinguish'd ?

D O N A L D S O N .

A bright scarlet mantle
Floats around his armour.

SIR ALEXANDER.

The impulse of an

I 2

Injur'd

Injur'd Father will add vigor to this arm,
But Ethelberta is not yet return'd.

DONALDSON.

Her visit to the camp surprises me.

SIR ALEXANDER.

It moves not my surprize, for when th' affections
Of her soul are rous'd, no fear, no danger—

JULIANA.

She comes—mark how her tortur'd mind speaks
thro'
Th' expressive eye.

Enter ETHELBERTA and ANSELM.

ETHELBERTA.

I've spoke in vain.

SIR ALEXANDER.

I do

Not yet believe he will proceed to such
Extreme barbarity.

ETHELBERTA.

I saw the pillars,
I saw the men with chains and instruments
Prepar'd, Ere now your sons are bound to the
Lofty pillars with their bosoms bare, to catch
The arrows which these men are now in act

To

To shoot, and only wait your terrible
Command.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Ah ! leave me then to my dread duty,
Retire, Retire !—The truce is just expiring,
The trembling sands have almost
Run their hour.

ETHELBERTA, *kneeling.*

See at your feet the Mother of your children,
Who thro' th' unvaried course of long attachment
Has shewn she's not unworthy of your choice.
Oh ! how I glory'd in that day, when first
You call'd me yours ! and do I live to curse
That day ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

Rise, Ethelberta, cease entreating—
Awake each virtue that surrounds your heart !
Elevate your mind, and dare to meet the
Approaching trial ; think that now you stand
As in a solemn temple, and forbear
With vain complaining accents to disturb
The awful service that is now beginning.

ETHELBERTA.

These proud exalted sentiments suit well
The breast that's fed with glory's turgid vapour :
My simple heart feels nothing but affection.

SIR

SIR ALEXANDER.

Would'st have me be a traitor to my country ?

ETHELBERTA.

Dar'st thou assume the sacred name of Father,
And can't thou unappall'd behold that scene ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

The voice that dares dissuade me from my duty
Is to my careless ear an empty sound.
Mark me, Ethelberta ! I'll not disgrace
The school of war in which I have been train'd :
My parting soul shall fly unsullied
Into the bosom of my ancestry,
And at my death my honour be convey'd
Immaculate, into the ashes of
My grave !

DONALDSON (*taking up the hour-glass.*)

The last remaining sands are hast'ning fast
Away.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Now bid the archers draw their
Bows.

ETHELBERTA.

One moment yet delay, one moment.

SIR

SIR ALEXANDER.

Ring out th' alarm-bell.

(*E�HELBERTA faints, and is carried out by JULIANA and ANSELM.*)

The besiegers scale the walls, and are repulsed, and pursued; the scene then changes to the place where the pillars are erected, where SIR ALEXANDER meets the General.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Well met! my childrens' blood cries out revenge!
New youthful vigor gushes on my breast,
And vengeance, like th' exterminating angel,
Rides on this sword.

(*They fight, the General falls.*)

Enter E�HELBERTA.

Your sons are now aveng'd:
See, Ethelberta, where the monster lies!

E�HELBERTA.

'Tis nobly done, now thou'rt indeed a Father:
But gaudy exultation ill becomes us,
The dreaded pillars we have not survey'd,
I'll hasten to the spot, and dare th' event.

(*they go to the pillars.*)

No children meet these fond enquiring eyes.

SIR ALEXANDER.

It seems as he relented of his purpose.

ETHELBERTA.

My heart presageful scorns the flatt'ring hope :
Mark how the pillars are o'erspread with arrows,
And some that strew the ground are stain'd with
blood. *(Takes up one, and advances
towards the stage.)*

This dread informer tells a horrid tale.

(Shouts at a distance.)

Whence that tumultuous noise ?

SIR ALEXANDER.

Haply my valiant
Men are now returning from their victory.

ETHELBERTA.

What's victory to me without my sons ?

*(Nearer shouts ; then the
troops enter, with ARCHI-
BALD and VALEN-
TINE.)*

Transporting sight ! I'm well repaid for all
The heart-pangs of this agonizing day.

SIR ALEXANDER.

How did ye escape the flight of arrows
That wing'd from yonder lofty battlements ?

ARCHI-

ARCHIBALD.

Chain'd to the pillars, to our doom resign'd,
We saw the angry weapons fly around.

VALENTINE.

Yet then, beneath the spreading canopy
Of danger, still did we remain untouched.

ETHELBERTA.

Some hov'ring angel, with benignant hand,
Averted from your breast the crowding darts.
Yet tell me all ! Oh ! say, by what bles'd means
Am I become the happiest of mothers ?

VALENTINE.

As the enemy retreated from the walls,
Orders were issued (shou'd we be alive)
To drag us back again in chains as captives ;
But our bold troops, with hasty step advancing,
By the resistless effort of Donaldson
We are restor'd to safety and to you.

ETHELBERTA to DONALDSON.

Take, take a mother's thanks : this gallant deed
Of thine, brave youth, yes, it is here engrav'd
Deep in the last receffes of my heart.

SIR ALEXANDER.

Thanks to my sons, my matchless sons, who on

K

This

This memorable day have pour'd fresh lustre
On our name and on our country. Dear boys,
Oblivion's gulph shall ne'er entomb your story,
While history, to time's remotest bound,
Her stream majestic shall thro' ages roll :
Like kindred flowers that on one stem arise,
You on her margin shall for ever glow.

[*Exeunt.*



End of the FOURTH and LAST ACT.





The E P I L O G U E.

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR, AND

SPOKEN BY MRS. POPE.

*A*s now I come unarm'd, without a dart,
I fear I can't presume to touch your heart ;
But your indulgence, here so often found,
Has on my heart, at least, imprest a wound ;
A sacred wound ! which I am proud to feel,
Which, if I know myself, will never heal.

Methinks I hear you say, Dear Mrs. POPE,
Amidst what mould'ring Annals did you grope,
And dig, from out the mine of tragic ore,
A tale unfashion'd from the days of yore—
Where two wild Boys take such prodigious pains,
And are determin'd to be hung in chains ?

Goes your complaint to this ?—that we display
A tale unsuited to the modern day ?
Does this fam'd Island then produce no more
The bright atchievements of the days of yore ?
Avert the thought !—still ancient Glory tow'rs,
And warm heroic Virtue still is ours !
Ev'n here, as I the martial theme pursue,
Full many a mother rises to my view,
Whose ardent Sons domestic comforts fly,
To seek th' advancing Foe with kindling eye,

I

And,

*And, braving the full force of hostile pow'r,
Add to their Country's wreath another flow'r.*

*No station, titles, here exemption claim ;
All feel alike the sympathetic flame :
E'en she whose life adds splendour to a Throne,
Whom ev'ry British heart delights to own —
E'en she beholds her brave undaunted Son,
In early youth the path of danger run !*

*Happy the realm, in this convulsive Age,
Whose tragic scenes are only on the Stage !
Calamity extends her wither'd hand,
And drags her barow o'er a neigb'rинг Land ;
While you, reclin'd beneath a softer sway,
Bask and enjoy a bright unclouded day.*

*Depress'd by civic storms, deform'd with woes,
Stung by the pangs of agonizing throes,
A Nation falls.—'Tis yours to still the storm,
To raise with gen'rous arm her bleeding form,
To soothe her shame, administer relief,
To close the gushing artery of grief,
To cast a veil o'er each disgraceful seam,
And once more lift her to her own esteem.*

*This Godlike act, which is reserv'd for you,
With glowing zeal and confidence pursue :
This act from future times shall homage claim,
Extend your worth, and consecrate your fame !*



